

These are the words I want to stress. He said:

We owe the right of dignity in sickness, as well as in health.

Protecting the health of our Nation's seniors was the right thing to do in the early 1960s, and it is the right thing for us to do now. Back in 1965, Medicare was designed for the way medicine was practiced at that point in time, and that was to treat acute or episodic illnesses that would bring people to the hospitals. It was not designed at that time, nor could it be designed at that time, to keep up with the dazzling innovations, the creativity, and the dynamic discoveries that were being made almost on a daily basis. These great advances have and will continue to transform medicine. We have a structure with Medicare that simply is not flexible enough or adaptable enough to assimilate or capture those great discoveries that are being made. That leads us to unacceptable gaps in coverage. One of those gaps has become apparent to us all, whether we are seniors or individuals with disabilities, or those of us in the political arena listening very carefully to our constituents. That is the gap for prescription drugs.

What seniors deserve is health care security. Unlike in the 1960s when it was designed—there haven't been that many changes, really, since the 1960s—today that health care security does involve good preventive care, access to affordable prescription drug protection from those unexpected catastrophic costs which can reach astronomical levels, and access to the modern technology that I mentioned before.

Since it doesn't include all of those things, it has not given the security I and I believe all of us believe seniors deserve.

If you look at certain technologies such as preventive tests for breast cancer and prostate cancer, it literally required an act of Congress before they could be covered by Medicare. We in Congress simply cannot respond, with all of the other responsibilities, to each and every innovation that comes through. We simply can't do it.

More basic care, such as cholesterol screening in my own field of heart-lung cardiology—you all know the importance of cholesterol—is not covered today. In the end, it creates lapses in a very good system. Medicare is a very good system, but it is simply not a system that is up to date with the quality of care that we could give our seniors today.

I would say that we do have an obligation—I would call it a moral obligation—to ensure that Medicare does provide the highest quality of care to our seniors that we are able to provide and which I believe we can provide.

The Senate Finance Committee has been working for the past several months to develop such a plan. We are building on the work of a lot of past bipartisan efforts in this body: the Breaux-Frist plan, the House-passed legislation, the Senate tripartisan plan

of the last Congress, and the President's framework for reform.

In early June, the Finance Committee will be addressing this matter under the leadership of Senator GRASSLEY, working with Senator BAUCUS, and we will take this proposal to the floor, as amended through committee, sometime in those last 2 weeks of June.

It is my hope and it is my intention to vote on final passage of such legislation before we adjourn for the July 4 Independence Day recess.

Once passed, we will begin to provide that prescription drug coverage for seniors and improve that system for health care security for our seniors.

I do think we need to address this issue in a bipartisan way. This is a big bill. It is a big expansion of Medicare. It is going to take people on both sides of the aisle to address this important goal of protecting the health of our seniors.

I mention all this only because it is so big and so large that I encourage my colleagues to start studying and re-studying the issue, even though we have a very busy week now, and then we have our recess during which we will be with our constituents back at home, and then we will come back to an energy bill, and then Medicare. I want people to start preparing for that right now because it is such a large challenge before us.

Our Nation's seniors are depending on us to do the right thing for them. With the appropriate planning, with the appropriate discussions, again, in a bipartisan way, we will be able to deliver on that promise.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Would the Chair announce morning business. Has that been done?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. It has not.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business until the hour of 10 a.m., with the time equally divided between the Senator from Texas, Mr. CORNYN, and the Democratic leader, or their designees.

The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I know the junior Senator from Texas is in the Chamber and wishes to speak.

I am wondering how long he wishes to speak. I direct the question through the Chair to the Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. About 10 minutes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have some remarks I wish to give while the majority leader is on the floor. I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 10:10, and that the extra time be equally divided.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MEDICARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the subject of Medicare is extremely important. Medicare is not a perfect program, but it is a good program. It has done so much to help the American people.

I am glad to see we are going to address the issue. I hope we address it with the intent of doing more than just calling it Medicare reform. It has to be real Medicare reform. I hope that can be accomplished.

(The remarks of Mr. REID pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 146 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

#### REBUILDING IRAQ

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to say a few words about the rebuilding of Iraq and, more importantly, the creation of a democratic Iraq.

Iraq is situated in the very cradle of civilization. It has an ancient and colorful history. And although it is easy to overlook now, Baghdad itself was once viewed as a center of learning and cultural activity until it was hijacked by the fascist regime of Saddam Hussein.

Today, Iraq is a hive of clan warfare, looting, and violent chaos. There are competing political groups, armed criminal gangs, and street thugs. The Iraqi people are free of Saddam, but they are not yet free of fear.

The situation is complex, delicate, and decidedly unpleasant. But unless America and our coalition partners act quickly and decisively, self-government will be recalled years from now as only a fleeting dream for the people of Iraq.

I believe there is still hope and opportunity—hope that the free people of Iraq can conquer the anarchy that controls their streets, and opportunity to fulfill the promise of a thriving democratic Iraq.

That dream may seem far off in Baghdad today, but as John Adams once said: "People and nations are forged in the fires of adversity."

In order for Iraq to grow and blossom from the rubble, it requires security. It requires order. It requires the rule of law.

First, we must begin by ensuring the basic security of the Iraqi people. People must be able to buy food at the market without fearing armed robbery or kidnapping. They must be able to worship without fearing snipers or skirmishes. Their children must be able to go to school without hearing the sound of gunfire nearby.

The Middle East looks like the Old West right now, and we need lawmen to help restore the peace. We must eliminate the threats posed by what remains